

THE NEW TESTAMENT IN SCOTS

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THE New Testament in Scots is a unique relic, in the vernacular, of Scottish Lollardy. That other translations of the New Testament in the vernacular had been made and used is quite certain. Wodrow, in his *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*, in recording the death of "that excellent person William Gordon of Earlston" at Bothwell Brig in 1679, says :—

"I am informed that the predecessors of this ancient family entertained the disciples of Wickliff and had a New Testament in the vulgar tongue, which they used to read in meetings in the woods about Earlston House."¹

Another who frequented such secret Bible-readings was Alexander Stewart, the eldest son of Stewart of Garlies. His name appears as "The Laird of Gairlies, Younger, for the Kirks of Nithsdale," among the commissioners to the first General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, December 1560.² Murdoch Nisbet of Hardhill, whose name is linked with the New Testament in Scots, was, therefore, only true to type in his love for the Scriptures. His story is told in Wodrow's *Select Biographies*, Vol. II, pp. 377f. From it, as Dr. T. G. Law points out, it is evident that soon after the trial of the Lollards of Kyle in 1494—for it was "some time before the year 1500"—Murdoch Nisbet was won for the new faith and threw in his lot with the Lollards. Owing to the outbreak of persecution in the reign of James V, he "fled overseas, and took a copy of the New Testament in writ."³ Dr. Law thinks he went to England, as some refugees from Scotland did, but Principal Lindsay favours the idea that he went to the continent, to one of the Low Countries.⁴ Certainly Wodrow's account supports the latter. The year of his flight is not known—it must have been not before 1513, the year of accession of James V—nor the length of his voluntary exile; but when he returned he brought with him his precious New Testament in Scots, which he himself had copied. At the time of Nisbet's return circumstances seem to have become more

¹ *Book III*, chap. ii, p. 108 (Blackie & Son's Edition, by the Rev. Robert Burns, D.D.).

² Sir H. Maxwell, *A History of Dumfries and Galloway* (1896), p. 191.

³ Wodrow's *Select Biographies*, Vol. II, pp. 377f.

⁴ *Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. I. *A Literary Relic of Scottish Lollardy*.

favourable to the Lollards, for others like himself availed themselves of the opportunity. Wodrow mentions two such, Hieronymous Russel, a former Franciscan friar, and Ninian Kennedy of Ayr, both of whom suffered martyrdom in Glasgow in 1539.¹ Nisbet's return most probably took place before 1525, for in this year, on 6th July, Parliament passed an Act forbidding the introduction of heretical books into Scotland on pain of loss of ship and goods and of personal imprisonment.² But the leaven of the new faith was working. Its adherents were increasing and sterner measures were adopted to crush it. Accordingly, on 7th June, 1535, Parliament reaffirmed the Act of July 1525 against the unlawful possession of heretical books.³ That Scriptures in the vernacular were included in these acts is to be understood, for the possession of the New Testament, or part of it, in the ordinary speech at once raised the suspicion of heresy. Thus, for example, Robert Forestare, William Forestare, Walter Cosland, David Grahame and James Watsoune had to find surety "to underly the law for Breking of his hienes Proclamaciones in haifing and using of sic bukes as ar suspect of Heresy, and ar defendit be the Kirk."⁴ This was in January 1538/9. The very next month Martyne Balkesky had to find caution to appear and to underly the law for the same offence.⁵ Another notable case was that of Thomas Forret, Vicar of Dolor (Dollar).⁶ It was his custom to preach every Sunday to his parishoners from the Epistle or Gospel, showing "the mysteries of the Scriptures to the vulgar people in English."⁷ He was arrested and condemned to death. At the place of execution a copy of the New Testament was found in his possession and held up for all to see with cries of "Heresy, heresy." Whereupon the crowd shouted, "Burn him."⁸

Such was the risk Murdoch Nisbet ran had he been discovered with his copy of the New Testament. Not only were such acts passed as those noted in 1525 and 1535, but active search was made to track down all who had come under suspicion of sympathy with Lollard heresy.⁹

There was a tradition in the family of Murdoch Nisbet, that this New Testament which he had copied was none other than a Wyclif version, indeed it was known by the name of the Wyclif New Testament.¹⁰

¹ Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials (Ancient) in Scotland*, Maitland Club, Vol. I, p. 215.

² *Act. Parl. Scot.*, Vol. II, p. 295, sect. 4.

³ *Act. Parl. Scot.*, Vol. II, p. 341, section "For eschewing of heresy within this realm, etc."

⁴ Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials* (Maitland Club), Vol. I, p. 216.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 213, 214.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 217.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 217.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 214.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Appendix p. 287.

¹⁰ Wodrow's *Analecta*, Vol. III, p. 518.

This remained the accepted opinion of historians,¹ for all trace of this interesting book had been lost and the claims of tradition could not therefore very well be tested. In 1893, however, the MS. of this copy was discovered among the *Auchinlek Papers*.

On a blank page occur several signatures of owners with the date, the last of such memoranda being by one Johne Neisbitt in 1645.² The fate of the MS., therefore, from that year till the time of its recent discovery is a blank.

Bound in with the MS. copy of the New Testament, as Dr. Law also tells us, is a copy of *A True Relation of the Life and Sufferings of John Nisbet in Hardhill*, in which the now familiar facts about Murdoch Nisbet are set forth.³ This, of course, led to the identification of the MS. New Testament with the Wyclif New Testament which Murdoch Nisbet had copied. Further examination revealed that it was something even more interesting than a copy of Wyclif's New Testament. It was nothing less than Purvey's version of Wyclif done into the Scots vernacular of the early XVI century. In view of the utter dearth of literary remains of Scottish Lollardy⁴ the importance and interest of this discovery were very great.

The work consists of three parts :—

I. *Introduction*, which includes the Prologue to the New Testament and the *Summe* of the Four Evangelists, together with the *Summe* of the Acts (chapters I-V), I and II Peter I, II, and III John and Jude.

II. The Biblical text of the New Testament together with the "Epistles of the Auld Testament."

III. *Appendix* including the Prologue to the Romans and the *Summe* of Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus, Philemon and Hebrews.⁵

Dr. Law, discussing the probable dates of the various portions, in his Introduction concludes that "Internal evidence points to the years 1513-22 as the extreme limits of time within which the text (or section II)

¹ McCrie's *Life of Andrew Melville* (1857), p. 404, Note D.

² *N.T. in Scots* (Scot. Text Soc.), Vol. I, *Introd.*, pp. viii-x.

³ *N.T. in Scots* (Scot. Text Soc.), Vol. I, *Introd.*, pp. viii-x.

⁴ *Scottish Hist. Review*, Vol. I. A *Literary Relic of Scottish Lollardy*, in which Principal Lindsay speaks of the *N.T. in Scots* as "the only literary relic we possess of the Scottish Lollards," thus ruling out, in his opinion, the *Nova Scotie* as the production of a Scottish Lollard.

⁵ *N.T.S.*, Vol. I, *Introd.*, p. xiv.

was probably begun and finished."¹ And again, "Whatever may be the date of these prefaces and additions, the transcript of the text may be assigned with great probability to about 1520." And the character of the handwriting agrees with the date.² Accordingly we may take 1520 as a most likely date for the New Testament in Scots.

In as much as the Prologue is largely a translation of Luther's, first printed in 1522, the date of Nisbet's prologue lies somewhere between 1522 and 1526, by which later date Tyndale's preface, also a translation of Luther's, had been printed and circulated. The Prologue to the Romans is a still later addition and therefore has been added at the end of the work.³

How widely used was this translation in Scots, it is not possible to say. It was evidently made by Nisbet for his own use and, as we learn from Wodrow's account, he was glad to share it with those who had access to him.⁴ But those were difficult times. Access to him could not have been too easy, and the multiplication of copies, however desirable, would be both difficult and dangerous in those times of persecution. As Dr. Law indicates, there is no sign of his work ever having been copied.⁵

Reference has been made to Gordon of Earlston and Alexander Stewart of Garlies, both of whom had a New Testament in the vernacular, but whose version it was we can only hazard a guess. If it were prior to 1526 it would almost certainly be of Wyclifite origin. Were it subsequent to that date, it is most likely to have been one of the books introduced by the merchants from the Low Countries and therefore probably to have been Tyndale's.

The fact is the New Testament in Scots was not without rivals. Tyndale's New Testament was introduced in 1526 and soon met the demand for Scriptures in the vernacular. His translation had come from the printing-press of Wittenberg. Printing in Germany had been established for more than half a century before it was attempted in Scotland, consequently there was little difficulty with regard to multiplying copies of Tyndale's translation. Compared with it the New Testament in Scots was at a distinct disadvantage, copying being a slow and laborious task. Besides, differences in language were not formidable. William Dunbar, who certainly wrote during the first two decades of the XVI century, claimed to write in English and looked on Chaucer and

¹ *N.T.S.*, Vol. I. pp. xiv, xv.

² *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

³ For the argument regarding these dates see Dr. Law's *Introd.*, *N.T.S.*, p. xv.

⁴ Wodrow's *Select Biographies*, Vol. II, p. 378.

⁵ *N.T.S.*, *Introd.*, p. xvi.

Gower as writing the same language as himself.¹ Sir David Lyndsay likewise considered English to be the common speech of his day.² From this time, too, dates the possibility of closer and more cordial relations between Scotland and England. Reformers in both countries were beginning to see that alliance instead of antagonism would serve the interests of the Faith better. Such circumstances conspired to make natural and easy the acceptance of Tyndale's translation and soon the New Testament in Scots became little more than an object of interest till even that seemed to fade and it was lost sight of and forgotten till its welcome recovery within recent years.

Another work not without interest in this connection is John Gau's *The Richt Vay to the Kingdom of Heuine*. This is a translation, generally close but not literal, of Christien Pedersen's *Den Rette Vey till Hiemmerigis Rige*. In this treatise Scripture is extensively quoted. There are some 189 quotations from the New Testament and in these all the books are generously quoted, Philemon, II Peter, II and III John alone excepted. Besides direct quotations, there are numerous scriptural references and paraphrases of verses to the extent of something like 110 and there are 136 more in which reference is made only to a chapter or an incident. The great majority of the quotations are obviously quite independent of the renderings either of Nisbet's New Testament or of Tyndale's. A few there are in which the three are practically the same. Some in which two of the versions agree as against the third. In such cases, it is usual for the renderings in *The Richt Vay* and Tyndale to agree against the *New Testament in Scots*.

Matthew v, 5—

Blessit be thai that murnis for they salbe confortit. (*New Test. in Scots.*)

Blessit ar thay quhilk murnis for thay sal be confortit.³ (*Gau's Trans.*)

Blessed are they that morne for they shal be comforted. (*Tyndale.*)

Matthew i, 1—

the book of the generacion of Jesu Crist, the son of Daud, the sonn of Abraham. (*N.T.S.*)

¹ Dunbar's *Poems* (S.T.S.), p. 10, LL. 253-255, also p. 15, LL. 110-112.

² Lyndsay's *Poems* (Laing's Ed.), Vol. II, p. 171, LL. 3455 and 3456.

³ *Richt Vay* (Scot. Text Soc.), p. 83, LL. 13, 14.

this is ye bwik of ye generatione of Iesus Christ/ye sone of Daid/
ye sone alsua of Abraham/.¹ (*G. Trans.*)

Tys id the boke off the generacion off Ihesus christ the sonne of
David the sonne also of Abraham. (*T.*)

I. Cor. vi, 18—

Fle ye fornicatioun. (*N.T.S.*)

fle fornicatione et ce.² (*G. Trans.*)

Fle fornicacion. (*T.*)

Matthew xxviii, 18—

Al powere in heuen and in erde is gevin to me. (*N.T.S.*)

Al ye power in hewine and yeird is giffine to me/³ (*G. Trans.*)

All power ys geven vnto me in heven and in erth. (*T.*)

Matthew xvii, 5—

This is my dereworthe sonn, in quhem I haue wele pleisit to me ;
here ye him. (*N.T.S.*)

This is my deir sone in quhom I delit heir hyme.⁴ (*G. Trans.*)

This is my deare sonne in whom I delite heare hym. (*T.*)

Matthew i, 21—

he sal mak his pepile saif fra thar synnis. (*N.T.S.*)

he sal saiff his pepile fra thair sinnis.⁵ (*G. Trans.*)

he shall save his people from their synnes. (*T.*)

Acts viii, 15—

thai prayit for thame, that thai suld resaue the Holigaast. (*N.T.S.*)

thay prait for thayme that they mycht resaue the halie spreit.⁶
(*G. Trans.*)

prayed for them that they might receaue the holy goost. (*T.*)

Matthew iii, 2 ; also iv, 17—

Do ye pennaunce : for the kingdom of heuenis sal neire. (*N.T.S.*)

Repent ye kingdome of hevine is at ye hand.⁷ (*G. Trans.*)

Repent the kyngdom of heven is at honde. (*T.*)

¹ *Richt Vay*, p. 106, LL. 34, 35.

² *Ibid.*, p. 23, L. 22.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 79, LL. 6, 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29, L. 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36, LL. 18f; also p. 63, LL. 5, 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55, LL. 2, 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 64, L. 24.

Romans vi, 12—

Tharfore regne nocht synn in your deidlie body. (*N.T.S.*)

and lat nocht sine ringe in our mortal bodis.¹ (*G. Trans.*)

Lett nott synne raigne therefore in youre mortall bodyes. (*T.*)

In all these instances similarity of translation can be accounted for by the fact that it was practically the same original the different individuals were translating.² It does not require any common basis more than that. It is therefore perfectly clear that in the *New Testament in Scots*, *Tyndale's Version* and *The Richt Vay* with respect to such quotations as occur in the latter, we have three independent translations of the Scriptures.

In view of the lack of literary data for the student of Scottish Lollardy, the *New Testament in Scots* acquires an importance which, were circumstances otherwise, it would not have. Here is a genuine Lollard relic which at least deserves a close and careful examination for the light it may throw on Lollard usage and teaching.

There is one rather noteworthy translation, due really to Wyclif's version. It occurs in Matthew xi, 5; it reads "pure men ar tane to preching of the gospell." In the parallel passage in Luke vii, 22, the rendering is "puremen are takin to preching of the gospell." In both verses the Vulgate reads, *pauperes euangelizantur*. The question, then, arises, is it justifiable to make "*euangelizantur*" as a deponent verb and translate it as in the active voice as is done in the *New Testament in Scots*? Du Cange gives as the meaning of "*euangelizare*" *Scripturas probare*." This would indicate that the form in the Vulgate here is passive.

Including the two references in question, there are in all some 39 instances of the use of *euangelizare* in the Vulgate. Of these four are instances of the verb used unquestionably in the passive form. These are:

Luke xvi, 16—

Lex et prophetae usque ad Iohannen: ex eo regnum Dei euangelizatur.

Galatians i, 11—

Notum enim uobis facio, fratres, euangelium quod euangelizatum est a me. . . .

¹ *Richt Vay*, p. 98, L. 12.

² It is to be noted, of course, that the *New Testament in Scots* is a translation of Wyclif's version which in turn is a translation of the Vulgate, whereas Tyndale translated from the Greek. Gau's, while independent of Tyndale's, may also have been from the Greek or it may have been from the Vulgate or even from Pederson's *New Testament in Danish*. See *Richt Vay*, *Introduction*, p. xx, note.

I Peter iv, 6—

Propter hoc enim et mortuis euangelizatum est :

I Peter i, 25—

Hoc est autem uerbum, quod euangelizatum est in uobis.

What is preached is clearly the subject of the verb in each of these cases so that the verb, at any rate, in these instances is passive. If the Lollard rendering of Matthew xi, 25, and of Luke vii, 22, is correct, these would be the only instances of the use of the verb in a deponent form. This is strong reason against such a possibility, and the conclusion is still further strengthened when it is noted that there are no fewer than 12 instances of "*euangelizare*" being followed by the dative of the word denoting the person or persons to whom the message is preached and only one instance in which it takes the accusative of the person. This solitary instance is Luke iii, 18: *Multa quidem et alia exhortans euangelizabat populum*, which is translated in the *New Testament in Scots* by And mony vthir thingis alsa he spak and prechit to the pepile. It is worth noting in passing that in *The Richt Vay to the Kingdom of Heuine*, John Gau, in a reference to Luke vii, 22, renders it— and the pwir resauis blitht tythandis.¹

In view of these considerations, Wyclif's translation, retained in the *New Testament in Scots*, does not seem to be justified. No doubt his practice of sending out "poor preachers" determined him in his rendering, for his preachers had been sent out before his translation of the Bible had been begun. But even so, the rendering can hardly be taken as an instance of heretical teaching. At most it would be an attempt to justify "evangelical poverty," which was recognised among the Franciscans within the Roman Church itself.

More instructive for the light cast on Lollard teaching is the rendering of certain words that had come to be official or technical terms in the Church. There is, for example, the word "*Pasche*." This word occurs 29 times in the *New Testament in Scots*, following "*paske*" in Wyclif's version, as a translation of "*pasha*" which occurs 27 times in the Vulgate. In Matthew xxvii, 62, the Vulgate "*post Parasceuen*" is translated by "*eftir pashe euen*," and in John xix, 31, "*Quoniam Parasceue erat*," by "*for it was the pasche euen*," in both instances following Wyclif's rendering.² Tyndale translates "*pasha*" by "*ester*" 12 times.³ In Luke ii, 41, his rendering is "*the feeste of ester*," and in John xix, 14, "*the*

¹ *The Richt Vay To The Kingdom of Heuine* (Scottish Text Society), p. 63.

² Wyclif: Mat. xxvii, 62, pask euen; Jn. xix, 31, pask eue.

³ Mat. xxvi, 2; Mark xiv, 1; Luke xxii, 1; Jn. ii, 13, 23; Jn. vi, 4; xi, 55; xi, 55; xii, 1; xiii, 1; xviii, 39; Acts xii, 4.

ester fest." Eleven times he uses the phrase "the ester lambe."¹ In Mark xiv, 12, he translates "pasha" in the first instance by "pascal lamb" and in the second by his more frequent "ester lamb." In John xviii, 28, he departs quite from his usual practice and gives as his rendering "*Pascha*." In Matthew xxvii, 62, he renders by "good fryday" and John xix, 31, by "sabot even." In the Authorised Version the translation is always "passover" except in three instances: Matthew xxvii, 62, "the day of preparation"; John xix, 31, "the preparation"; and Acts xii, 4, "Ester." It is significant also to note in passing that William Dunbar, the poet, always uses "pasche."²

What can we gather from these facts? They are not of doctrinal significance. Their interest is rather linguistic. The Reformation evidently brought with it a change of vocabulary. Pre-Reformation thought was apparently partial to one form of words (*pasche*). When the Reformation movement came a different form was adopted, as instanced by Tyndale. The form of words favoured by Lollardy places it on the pre-Reformation side of the line.

Another indication of the same kind is the translation of the Vulgate "*stola*." All the instances—five in number—are to be found in the book of Revelation.³ In each case the *New Testament in Scots* has "stolis," following Wyclif's "stoolis." In Revelation vi, 11, the word "stole" is repeated in the *New Testament in Scots* translation though there is not a second "*stola*" in the Vulgate.

Tyndale uses the phrase "longe whyte garmentes" in the first three instances. In Revelation vii, 14, he has "made their garmentes large and made them whyte," while at Revelation xxii, 14, the Greek version he followed is quite different from the Vulgate and he translates "that do his commandments." At Revelation xv, 6, in Wyclif's version, we find "a stool clene and white"; in the *New Testament in Scots* "stole" is deleted and "staan" added in the margin. Tyndale's version reads "pure and bryght linnen," and the Authorised Version "pure and white linen." The Authorised Version and, it is worth noting, also the Douay Bible favour as their usual rendering "white robes."

Again it would be easy to suggest more than the facts warrant. "*Stola*" means a long loose robe, but by the early Middle Ages it had

¹ Mat. xxvi, 17, 19; Mark xiv, 12, 14; Luke xxii, 7, 8, 11; Luke xxii, 13, 15; I Cor. v, 7; xi, 28.

² Dunbar's *Poems* (Scot. Text Soc.), Vol. II, p. 152, No. XXXVI, line 19, "Paiss"; p. 194, No. L, line 49, "*Pasche*"; p. 282, No. XC, line 63, "Fra Pasche to Pasche."

³ Revelation vi, 11; vii, 9, 13, 14; xxii, 14.

come to be used particularly of a priestly vestment and is still so used. Now it is significant that in translations of Reformation and post-Reformation times, when the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers came to be emphasised, the word with the priestly associations was dropped in favour of one quite untechnical and once more Lollardy has its place with the pre-Reformation system of things.

This is further borne out by the translation of I Peter v, 3, "*neque ut dominantes in cleris.*" This is translated in the *New Testament in Scots* "nouthir as havin lordeschip in the clergie." The Douay version is in the same line, "neither as lording it over the clergy." With the Reformation we note a change here also. Tyndale renders the verse, "nott as though ye were lordes over the parishes," which is more akin to the Authorised Version, "neither as being lords over God's heritage."

Bearing on the same idea, as tending to magnify the "religious" life as a life exclusive and apart, the translation of "*presbyterus*" deserves to be noted. There are five instances of this word in the Vulgate.¹ In each case the *New Testament in Scots* has "preestis," following Wyclif, while the Douay version invariably has "priests." Tyndale, as usual, breaks with this usage and in each case has "seniours," and the Authorised Version "elders." In line with this usage also, we find the word "*presbyterium*" in I Timothy iv, 14, translated by "presthede" in the *New Testament in Scots* (prist or pristhode in Wyclif), and by "priesthood" in the Douay Testament. Tyndale translates by "a seniour," while the Authorised Version has "presbytery."

The translation of other two words must be noted to complete this part of our study. In the Vulgate the word "*praepositus*" occurs in Hebrews xiii, 17, 24. In the first instance Wyclif translates "proustis" (or prelatis); in Hebrews xiii, 24, "souereynes." The *New Testament in Scots*, in both cases, renders by "soueranis," while "them that have the oversight of you" is Tyndale's rendering in both instances. The Roman Church's understanding of the verses is shown in the Douay translation, which in both cases is "prelates," although in Archbishop Hamilton's *Catechism* this verse is translated, "obey thame that hais the reule ouir you."²

The other word is "*neophytus*," found in I Timothy iii, 6. Following Wyclif, Nisbet's version has "new conuertit," in no sense a technical phrase denoting status or rank in the Church. Tyndale likewise uses

¹ I Tim. v, 17; v, 19; Tit. i, 5; Acts xiv, 22; Acts xv, 2; James v, 14.

² *The Catechism of John Hamilton*, 1552, edited by T. G. Law, p. 81.

simply "yonge man." Again the Roman Church's understanding of the word is given in the Douay rendering, "neophyte."

From these cases considered it is evident that in thought and language Scottish Lollardy belonged mainly to the pre-Reformation system of things, the last two instances indicating, however, that tendencies were at work anticipatory of the Reformation teaching.

More important for the elucidation of Lollard teaching than the linguistic characteristics just considered are the doctrinal questions involved in certain translations. Take for example the renderings of "*paenitet*" and the various phrases in which "*paenitentia*" occurs.

Bishop Challoner, in his note in the Douay Bible on Matthew iii, 2, the first instance of the phrase, says :—

"Do penance. *Paenitentiam agite*. μετανοείτε, which word, according to the use of the scriptures and the holy fathers, does not only signify repentance and amendment of life, but also punishing past sins by fasting and such like penitential exercises."

This is in line with the account given of penance in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, where penance is said to designate :—

- I. A virtue.
- II. A Sacrament of the New Law.
- III. A canonical punishment inflicted according to the earlier discipline of the Church.
- IV. A work of satisfaction enjoined upon the recipient of the sacrament.

Then the article continues :—

"These have as their common centre the truth that he who sins must repent and as far as possible make reparation to Divine justice."¹

This emphasis on penance is stressed by the Council of Trent, "for it has been declared by the Council of Trent, that 'To those who have fallen after baptism, the sacrament of penance is as necessary for salvation as baptism is to those who have not already been regenerated ;' "²

Penance, therefore, according to the teaching of the Roman Church, is more than repentance. It includes the due performance of such officially recognised exercises as are imposed by the Church upon the penitent.

¹ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XI, p. 618.

² *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, translated into English by Very Rev. J. Donovan, D.D. (1908), p. 228.

And the due performance of these exercises is as important to the true meaning of penance, and as essential, as is repentance.

In the Vulgate there are 62 instances in which the words "paenitet" and "paenitentia" are used in various combinations and phrases. Two of these, Mark i, 4, and i, 15, need not concern us, as verses 1 to 21 of Mark i are missing in the *New Testament in Scots*. There are, therefore, in all 60 instances to be considered. Of these 60 it is found that 50¹ are rendered by "penance" in Nisbet's version, following Wyclif's translation in these cases. In Tyndale's, however, the rendering invariably is "repent" or "repentance," never once "penance." So also is it in Gau in such instances as occur in *The Richt Vay*, but in Archbishop Hamilton's *Catechism* again "penance" is used in the passages he quotes. It is interesting to note that in three of these cases, while the *New Testament in Scots* prefers "penance" the Douay version has "repent." These three cases are Acts v, 31; Acts xi, 18; and Revelation ii, 21.

Acts v. 31—

God vphieit with his richthand this prince and saluatour, that *penance* war gevin to Israel and remissioun of synnis. Wyclif also reads "penaunce."

Acts xi, 18—

Tharfor alsa to hethinmen God has gevin *penance* to lijf. Wyclif here has "penaunce to lijf."

Revelation ii, 21—

And I gaue to hir tyme, that scho suld *do penance*, and scho wald nocht *do penance* of hir fornicatioun. Wyclif has "penaunce" in both instances, but the Douay version has "do penance" in the first instance, but "will not repent" in the second.

The most instructive examples for our purpose are, of course, those in which the *New Testament in Scots* departs from its usual practice and employs words or phrases other than "Penance" or its combinations. There are ten such instances: Matthew xxi, 29; 32; xxvii, 3; Luke xvii, 3-4; Acts iii, 19; Romans ii, 4; xi, 29; II Corinthians vii, 8-10; II Timothy ii, 25; Hebrews vii, 21. We shall consider each in turn noting the translations in the *New Testament in Scots* (N.T.S.), Wyclif's

¹ Instances in which "paenitet" or "paenitentia" in *Vulgate* are translated by "penance" in the *New Testament in Scots*:—Mat. iii, 2, 8, 11; iv, 17; xi, 20, 21; xii, 41; Mark vi, 12; Luke iii, 3, 8; v, 32; x, 13; xi, 32; Luke xiii, 3, 5; xv, 7, 7, 10; xvi, 30; xvii, 3; xxiv, 47; Acts ii, 36; v, 31; viii, 22; xi, 18; xiii, 24; xvii, 30; Acts xix, 4; xx, 21; xxvi, 20, 20; II Cor. vii, 9, 10; II Cor. xii, 21; Hebrews vi, 1, 6; xii, 17; II Peter iii, 9; Rev. ii, 5, 5, 16, 21, 21; 22; iii, 3, 19; ix, 20, 21; Rev. xvi, 9, 11.

version (W), Tyndale's Translation (T), the Authorised Version (A), the Vulgate (V), and the Douay (D).

Matthew xxi, 29—

bot eftirwart *he forthocht* and went furth. (N.T.S.)

Aftirwrde *he stired* by *penaunce* (or forthynkinge) & wente. (W.)

But afterwards *repented* and went. (T.)

But afterwards he *repented*, and went. (A.)

Postea autem *paenitentia motus*, abiit. (V.)

But afterwards, being *moved with repentance*, he went. (D.)

There is clearly no question of any technical religious meaning here in "paenitentia." It means simply he thought better of it. Still, it is to be noted that in one of the Wyclif versions "penance" is used, although another word, "forthouyte," is given as an alternative rendering. Purvey, in his rendering of Wyclif, reads "forthouyte" and has no mention of "penaunce" even as an alternative.

Matthew xxi, 32—

Bot ye saw and had *na forthinking* eftire, that ye beleue to him. (N.T.S.)

Sothely yee seinge *nether hadden penaunce* afterwarde that yee bileueden to hym. (W.)

But ye (though ye sawe it) yet were not *moved with repentance*, that ye myght afterwarde have beleved hym. (T.)

And ye, when ye had seen, *repented not* afterward, that ye might believe him. (A.)

Uos autem uidentes *nec paenitentiam habuistis* postea, ut crederetis ei. (V.)

but you, seeing it, did not even afterwards *repent*, that ye might believe him. (D.)

Purvey again departs from the older Wyclif rendering and has "But ye sayn, and hadden no forthenkyng aftir, that ye bileueden to hym." This no doubt accounts for Nisbet's rendering of "forthinking" in the *New Testament in Scots*. It is worth remarking, however, that in this instance so far from Wyclif's translation being "heretical" it is more in line with the teaching of the Roman Church than even the Douay version is. Purvey's preference would seem to show the influence of Lollard thought.

Matthew xxvii, 3—

Than Judas, that betrayit him, saw that he was dampnet, *he repentit* . . . (N.T.S.)

thanne Judas that bitrayede hym, seinge that he was dampnyde; he *ledde by penaunce* (or forthinkyng) ; (W.)

Then when Judas which betrayed hym, sawe that he was condempned, he *repented* hym sylfe. (T.)

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, *repented*. (A.)

Tunc uidens Iudas qui eum tradidit, quod damnatus esset, *paenitentia ductus* . . . (V.)

Then Judas, who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, *repenting himself* . . . (D.)

The departure from the use of the word "penance" in the *New Testament in Scots* is due to the fact that in Purvey's version of the Wyclif translation the verse is rendered, "Thanne Judas that bitraiede hym, say that he was dampned, *he repentide*." But again there can be no question of penance in the sense understood by the Roman Church, for penance accompanies forgiveness and is imposed by the Church. Forgiveness was precisely what Judas despaired of and therefore he was not yet at the stage when "penance" would have been appropriate. The Roman doctrine does not emerge here.

Luke xvii—

3. gif thi bruther has synnyt aganes thee, blame him ; and *gif he do penance*, forgeue him.

4. And gif vii tymes in the day he do synn aganes thee, and vii tymes in the day he be conuertit to thee, and say, *Jt forthinkis me* ; forgeue thou to hym. (N.T.S.)

3. gif thy brother schal synne in thee ; blame hym & *gif he schal do penaunce*, forgyue to him.

4. & gif seuene sithes in the day, he schal synne in thee, & seuene sithes in the day he schal be conuertide to thee ; seyinge, *it forthinkith me* ; forgyue to hym. (W.)

3. . . . if thy brother trespas agaynst the/ rebuke hym : and *if he repent/* forgeve hym.

4. And though he syn agenst the seven tymes in won daye/ and seven tymes in a daye tourne agayne to thee sayinge : *it repenteth me/* forgeve hym. (T.)

3. . . . If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and *if he repent*, forgive him.

4. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, *I repent*; thou shalt forgive him. (A.)

3. Si peccauerit frater tuus, increpa illum; et si *paenitentiam egerit*, dimitte illi.

4. Et si septies in die peccauerit in te, et septies in die conuersus fuerit ad te, dicens: *Paenitet me*: dimitte illi. (V.)

3. . . . if thy brother sin against thee, reprove him: and *if he do penance*, forgive him.

4. And if he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day be converted unto thee, saying: *I repent*: forgive him. (D.)

It is instructive to take these two verses together in view of the fact that "do penance" is used in the one, and "forthink" in the other, both in the Wyclif version and in the *New Testament in Scots*, which distinction is retained in the Douay Bible. In the Vulgate, whatever be the connotation we give to the Latin words, there is, at any rate, no verbal distinction made, while Tyndale and the Authorised Version also agree in making no distinction. With regard to verse 4, no question of "penance" in the technical sense may be said to arise, as the person at fault is merely describing his own frame of mind. But in the translation of verse 3 given by Wyclif, Nisbet and the Douay version, there is the tacit assumption of the traditional teaching of the Roman Church, the idea here being, that if the one at fault has carried out all that the Church has enjoined in connection with the fault, forgiveness cannot then be withheld.

Acts iii, 19—

Tharfore, *be ye repentand*, and be ye conuertit, that your synnis be done away. (N.T.S.)

Therefore be yee repentaunt & be yee conuertide that youre synnes be done aweye. (W.)

Repent ye therefore and turne that youre synnes maye be done awaye. (T.)

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. (A.)

Paenitemini igitur et conuertimini ut deleantur uestra peccata: (V.)

Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. (D.)

In this case also there can be no question of a reference to the sacrament of Penance for, according to the form of the verb used in the Vulgate, "paenitemini," thought is focussed upon the feelings rather than upon the actions of the subject, upon the frame of mind which, according to Roman teaching, is the pre-requisite for penance rather than upon the acts of penance.

Romans ii, 4—

Knawis thou nocht, that the benignitee of God leidis thee to *forthinking*? (N.T.S.)

Onknowest thou for the benyngnyte (or good wille) of god leedis thee to *penaunce*? (W.)

. . . and remenbrest not how that the kyndnes of God ledith the to *repentaunce*? (T.)

. . . not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to *repentance*? (A.)

Ignorans quoniam benignitas Dei *ad paenitentiam* te adducit? (V.)

Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to *penance*? (D.)

Purvey's version reads, "Knowist thou not, that the benyngnyte of God ledith thee to *forthenkyng*?" This is clearly a case where the Lollard translation has departed from the traditional Roman idea, yet the fact that in one of the Wyclif versions, earlier certainly than Purvey's from which Nisbet worked, "penance" is used as an indication that Lollard thought on the subject was only groping its way towards a new position. It is further of interest to note that in Archbishop Hamilton's *Catechism*¹ this verse is quoted thus: "Kennis thow nocht that the gentilness of God Leidis the to *pennance*?"

Romans xi, 29—

And the giftis and the calling of God ar *without forthinking*. (N.T.S.)

Sothely the giftis & clepyng of god; ben *with outen forthinkyng* or *reuokyng*). (W.)

For verely the gyftes and callynge of god are soche/ that it cannot *repent* hym of them. (T.)

For the gifts and calling of God are without *repentance*. (A.)

Sine paenitentia enim sunt dona et uocatio Dei. (V.)

For the gifts and the calling of God are *without repentance*. (D.)

¹ *The Catechism of John Hamilton*, 1552 (1884 ed.), by Thomas Graves Law, p. 217.

There is clearly no question of "penance" as the Roman Church understands it, in this instance.

II Corinthians vii—

8. For thouch I made yow sarie in a pistile, it *repentis* me nocht ; thought it *repentit*, . . .

9. Now I haue ioy ; nocht for ye war made soroufull, bot for ye war made sorouful to *penance*. . . .

10. For the sorow that is eftire God, wirkis *pennance* into stedfast heill, (N.T.S.)

8. For gif I made you soory in a pistle now it *rewith* not me/ . . .

9. nowe I haue joye/ not for yee weren made soroweful but for yee weren made soroweful to *penaunce* . . .

10. . . . forsothe that sorowe that is aftir god ; worchith *penaunce* into stidefast helthe. (W.)

8. Wherefore though I made you sory with a letter I *repent* not : though I did *repent*.

9. but I nowe reioyce/ not that ye were sory/ but that ye so sorowed/ that ye *repented*.

10. for godly sorowe causeth *repentaunce* vnto health/, (T.)

8. For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not *repent*, though I did *repent* :

9. Now I reioice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to *repentance*. . . .

10. For godly sorrow worketh *repentance* to salvation not to be *repented of* . . . (A.)

8. Quoniam etsi contristauit uos in epistula, *non me paenitet* : etsi *paeniteret*, . . .

9. nunc gaudeo : non quia contristati estis, sed quia contristati estis *ad paenitentiam* : . . .

10. Quae enim secundum Deum tristitia est, *paenitentiam* in salutem stabilem operatur. (V.)

8. For although I made you sorrowful by my epistle, I do not *repent*. And if I did *repent*, . . .

9. Now I am glad : not because you were made sorrowful, but because you were made sorrowful unto *penance*.

10. For the sorrow that is according to God worketh *penance*, steadfast unto salvation. (D.)

These verses are important for the light they throw upon the principles governing the use of the different words used to translate "*paenitet*" and "*paenitentia*." When St. Paul is speaking of his regret for having written the painful letter, there is no question of "penance." But the sorrow which he sought to produce in the hearts of the Corinthians in order to lead them to a better way of life was a different matter. "Penance" in the Roman sense would at least have a meaning there, apart altogether from the question whether such a connotation had New Testament warrant. The Lollard renderings are therefore quite in accordance with the teaching of the Roman Church. But Tyndale, as usual, indicates a departure from it.

II Timothy ii, 25—

With temperance repreving thame that aganestandis the treuth,
that sum tyme God geve to thame *forthinking*, that thai knew
the treuth, . . . (N.T.S.)

With temperaunce reproynge them that agenstonden treuthe
that sumtyme god gyue them *penaunce* for to knowe the treuthe.
(W.)

And can informe them that resist/ yf that god att eny tyme
will geve them *repentaunce* for to knowe the trueth : (T.)

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God
peradventure will give them *repentance* to the acknowledging of
the truth. (A.)

Cum modestia eorripientem eos qui resistunt : ne quando det
illis Deus *paenitentiam* ad cognoscendam. (V.)

With modesty admonishing them that resist the truth : if
peradventure God may give them *repentance* to know the truth. (D.)

It is quite plain that the reference here must be to the mental state of "all men" and not to any orthodox or conventional way of expressing outwardly that state. Yet it is significant that the only version in which the word "penance" occurs is a Wyclif version, though it must also be noted that Purvey's rendering is "that sum tyme God gyue to hem *forthenkyng*, that thei knowen the treuthe," pointing surely to the fact that Lollardy had not yet broken completely with the old faith however it might be feeling towards a new religious vocabulary.

Hebrews vii, 21—

The Lord suore, and it sal nocht *repent* him, Thou art a preest
withoutin end, be the ordour of Melchisedech ; (N.T.S.)

the lorde swore & it schal not *rewe* hym. (W.)

The lorde sware/ and will not *repent*. (T.)

The Lord sware and will not *repent*. (A.)

Iuravit Dominus et *non paenitebit* eum. (V.)

The Lord hath sworn that he will *not repent*. (D.)

Again there can be no question of penance in the technical sense of the Roman Church, as repentance is here predicated of God.

These ten examples then are the only instances in which the *New Testament in Scots* deviates from the practice, followed in the case of the other 50 instances, of rendering the Vulgate by "penance."

It is worth noting also that of the 50 instances above referred to, no fewer than 27 are forms of "Paenitentiam agere" in the Vulgate, and, without exception, these are translated in Nisbet's Testament by "do penance."

There are also two rather striking instances, viz., Luke x, 13, and Revelation ii, 21, in which the verb "paenitet" is used in the Vulgate and translated by "Do penance" in Murdoch Nisbet's version. These are the only two instances of such usage. In all other cases "paenitentia" is used in combination with some other word or words, when the translation in the *New Testament in Scots* is "penance." From these observations it is clear that however the Lollards may have criticised the teaching and practice of the Church of their day with regard to auricular confession and priestly absolution for sins, they had not yet completely broken with the Roman penitential system.

Another clue-word in the Vulgate, meriting attention, is "sacramentum." It occurs 8 times as a translation of μυστήριον, which, in other 19 instances,¹ is rendered by "Mysterium."

With regard to these 19 instances there is nothing that calls for special comment, though it may be noted in passing that in the *New Testament in Scots* I Corinthians iv, 1, reads: "Sa a man gesse vs, mynisteris of Crist, and dispensaris of the ministerijs of God." The Vulgate here has "dispensatores mysteriorum Dei."

On the very threshold of any consideration of the instances in which "sacramentum" is used, there lies the prior question of the adequacy or otherwise of "sacramentum" as a rendering of μυστήριον. But as this question lies really outwith the scope of our present purpose—our concern being with the text of the Vulgate as it stands, and not with the con-

¹ Mat. xiii, 11; Mark iv, 11; Luke viii, 10; Romans xi, 25; Romans xvi, 25; I Cor. ii, 7; iv, 1; xiii, 2; xiv, 2; xv, 51; Ephes. iii, 4; vi, 19; Col. i, 26; ii, 2; iv, 3; II Thes. ii, 7; I Tim. iii, 9; Rev. x, 7; xvii, 5.

sideration whether the Vulgate is an accurate rendering of the Greek original—it is sufficient if we merely mention it.

The instances that now claim our attention are as follows:—

Ephesians i. 9.—(Having made known unto us the mystery of his will—*sacramentum uoluntatis suae*.)

Ephesians iii, 3/4.—(How that by revelation he had made known unto me the mystery—*sacramentum*; as I wrote afore in a few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery—in *mysterio*—of Christ.)

Ephesians v, 32.—(This is a great mystery—*sacramentum hoc magnum est*; but I speak concerning Christ and the church.)

Colossians i, 27.—(To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery—*divitas glorie sacramenti huius*—among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.)

I Timothy iii, 16.—(And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness—*pietatis sacramentum*.)

Revelation i, 20.—(The mystery of the seven stars—*sacramentum septem stellarum*.)

Revelation xvii, 7.—(And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman—*sacramentum mulieris*—and of the beast that carrieth her.)¹

It is to be noted with regard to every one of these that the rendering in the *New Testament in Scots* was originally “sacrament,” but was changed into “sacrait,” sometimes in darker ink, as in Revelation i, 20; sometimes by a later hand, as in Revelation xvii, 7.¹

It is also to be remarked that in the Wyclif versions, including Purvey’s, the rendering is uniformly “sacrament,” while in Tyndale’s translation “mystery” is used with one variation, Ephesians v, 32: “This is a grett secrete/ but I speake bitwene Christ and the congregacion.”

It is significant, too, that in the Douay Bible, “mystery” is a translation favoured in seven out of these 8 cases, the exception again being Ephesians v, 32.

This latter is a crucial case. In the *New Testament in Scots* the verse reads: v. 31. For this thing a man sal forsake his fader and his moder, and he sall draw to his wijf; and thai salbe ii in aa flesch. 32. This sacrait² is gret; ye, I say in Crist and in the kirk.

¹ “Sacrait corrected out of sacrament,” note in *New Testament in Scots* (S.T.S.), Vol. II, p. 242.

² *Ibid.*

Wyclif's version of course reads, "Forsothe this sacrament is greet." Archbishop Hamilton, in his *Catechism*, commenting on the verse, writes:

"Thairfor S. Paul sais spekand of the band of matrimonie. Sacramentum hoc magnum est, ego autem dico in Christo et in ecclesia. Matrimonye is ane gret sacrament, bot I say in Christ and in the kirk."¹

This idea is perpetuated in the Douay version which has, "This is a great sacrament." Tyndale's translation, as we have seen, is "This is a grett secrete." It is just possible that the alteration of "sacrament" to "sacrait" in Murdoch Nisbet's New Testament is due to the influence of Tyndale. While Gau has no translation of this verse in *The Richt Vay*, he clearly indicates his position in a reference in which he says, "S. Paul in ye v chaipthur to ye Ephesias/ callis ane greit halie secreit thing quhair with all chrissine men ar maid ane body with Iesu Christ."²

From these examples it is obvious that two different points of view are indicated. On the one hand there is that of the Roman Church, according to which matrimony is a sacrament. On the other, there is the Reformed position, as represented by Tyndale and Gau, which does not recognise a sacrament of matrimony. The Lollard standpoint is not so clearly defined. When the translation was made at first by Murdoch Nisbet, he, at least, accepted the older position, but it is just as certain, that Lollard opinion was not satisfied nor stable, but tended more and more to what became the Reformed doctrine. This would seem to be the explanation of the alteration of "sacrament" to "sacrait."

There is another trace of Reformation influence similar to the textual alteration just mentioned. In the text of the New Testament in Scots itself, the beginning of the lessons in the Epistles and Gospels usually read in Church is marked in Nisbet's MS. with a red cross ☩ and the end with a half-cross also in red ☩ These correspond generally with those in Tyndale's editions and evidently are later additions to the Lollard text.³

¹ *The Catechism of John Hamilton*, 1552, edited by T. G. Law, p. 236. See also *Catechism of Council of Trent*, trans. into Eng. by Very Rev. J. Donovan, D.D. (1908), p. 297.

² John Gau, *The Richt Vay to the Kingdome of Hevine* (S.T.S.), p. 57, LL. 10-12. This is his only reference to the verse discussed above.

³ *New Testament in Scots* (S.T.S.), Vol. I, *Introd.*, pp. xv and xvi. See also ontspeice in same volume for reproduction of MS.

It only remains to add that it is clear there was no schismatic intent behind the copying and use of the *New Testament in Scots*. The epistles of the Old Testament, which had been included at the end, were those "quhilk ar red in the Kyrk aponne certane dayes of the Yeir,"¹ and the attempt was clearly one to provide in the vernacular a faithful copy of the Scriptures for the ordinary man to read. To sum up in the words of Dr. Law :

So it may be said of Purvey's version that though the translator was a disciple of Wycliffe, his text bears no trace of theological bias. It was a very literal, very honest English reproduction of the Vulgate of his day ; and Nisbet's Scottish recension is, in turn, no less honest and faithful."²

With this verdict we entirely agree. At the same time, this product of the early XVI century is not without its witness to the great changes in religious thought that were yet to mark out this century in the history of western civilisation.

¹ *New Testament in Scots* (S.T.S.), Vol. III, p. 256. See also note (a) on same page.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, *Introduction*, pp. xxxiii f.

